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U.S. Department of State Diplomacy in Action

Terrorist Designations of Groups Operating in Syria

Media Note

Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC

May 14, 2014

The Department of State announced the amendment of the designation of al-Qa'ida in Iraq (AQI) as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity under section 1(b) of Executive Order (E.O.) 13224 to add the alias Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as its primary name and remove all aliases associated with al-Nusrah Front (ANF). Additionally, the Department of State announced the designation of ANF as an FTO under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity under section 1(b) of E.O. 13224.

The Department will also add the following aliases to the ISIL listing: the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), ad-Dawla al-Islamiyya fi al-'Iraq wa-sh-Sham, Daesh, Dawla al Islamiya, and Al-Furqan Establishment for Media Production. Furthermore, under the same authorities, the Department of State designated al-Nusrah Front as a standalone FTO and SDGT.

The consequences of the FTO and E.O. 13224 designations include a prohibition against knowingly providing, or attempting or conspiring to provide, material support or resources to, or engaging in transactions with these organizations, and the freezing of all property and interests in property of the organizations that is in the United States, or come within the United States or the control of U.S. persons. The Department of State took these actions in consultation with the Departments of Justice and Treasury.

These adjustments do not represent a change in policy. Both ISIL and ANF have been designated domestically for several months. In December 2012, the Department of State amended the FTO and E.O. 13224 designations of AQI to include ANF as an alias. Since that amendment occurred, differences over management and tactics have led to an increase in violence between the two groups. Tension peaked in early 2014, when al-Qa'ida (AQ) leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, released a statement dismissing ISIL from AQ. Therefore, we have amended the AQI designation to better reflect the change in status of both ISIL and ANF. We review our designations regularly and, as needed, make adjustments to ensure we remain current with nomenclature and other changes.

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